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Court case continuing...

State finds hazardous waste in local park

State tests have confirmed the presence of hazardous waste materials at a local park.

Dried paint found in a steel drum at Saw-Wee-Kee Park contained lead levels high enough to classify it as a hazardous waste, according to the results of a Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) test.

The IEPA test found a lead content in the paint of 6.44 parts per million. The agency classifies waste materials containing at least or more than 5.0 parts per million of lead as hazardous.

The paint sample was taken by an IEPA inspector from one of approximately 25 steel drums at the 150 acre park, situated off Sundown Lane in unincorporated Oswego Township.

The IEPA inspector, Mary Glynn, also took test samples of ground seepage that has been flowing from park property towards the nearby Fox River. The agency has yet to report the results of the seepage tests.

The park is owned and maintained by the Oswegoland Park District. The State of Illinois deeded the park property to the district in the early 1960s.

Park District Director Bert Gray reported Tuesday that the steel drums have been on the property since at least 1966 when a garbage dump on the property was closed.

If ordered to do so by the IEPA, Gray said the park district will dispose of all

of the drums on the property according to agency guidelines.

"We will do whatever the IEPA advises us to do about the drums," he noted.

The IEPA has given the park district until May 27 to remove debris discovered at the park property nearly two months ago by agency officials.

In addition, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has ordered the park district to obtain a permit from the agency to allow the filling of a low section of the park.

Gray noted, however, that the scheduling of clean-up work at the park now depends on the outcome of legal proceedings in circuit court.

A group of Sundown Lane residents is seeking a court injunction preventing the clean-up until materials dumped on the property can be examined.

In their court documents seeking the injunction, the residents charged that the park district-approved filling at the park site has resulted in the depositing of "various hazardous waste materials" on the property.

The documents also charge that "seepage and leakage of hazardous wastes pose a health hazard" and threatens contamination of nearby private water wells.

The IEPA cited the park district for numerous violations of state pollution laws following an inspection Feb. 22.

A court hearing on the injunction request held last Friday in Yorkville was adjourned until Wednesday, May 22.

drums were told
to be removed in
1962 and 1963
+ were not. Just
removed in 1990